Saint Boniface



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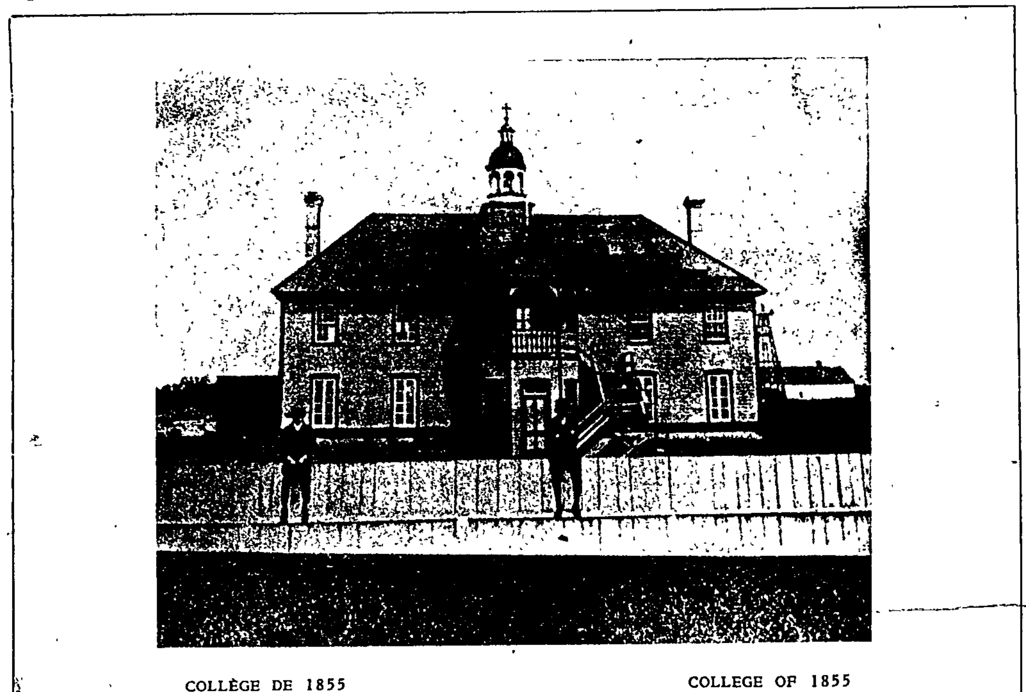
ON September the twenty-fourth, 1738, La Vérendrye, the discoverer of the Canadian North West, after descending the Red River reached the mouth of the Assiniboine. Fur traders and coureurs-de-bois followed in the path blazed by the heroic explorer. In 1775, the French Métis settled definitely on the site of the present city of Saint Boniface.

However, the history of the city dates back not to 1775 but to 1818, the year which marks the arrival of the first two missionaries, Rev. Fathers Provencher and Dumoulin.

In 1812, groups of Irish and Scotch settlers were sent out by Selkirk to the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine. Two rival Companies, — the Nor' Westers and the Hudson's Bay — were at this time struggling for the monopoly of fur trade in the West. The hostility with which each Company looked upon the other soon degenerated into conflicts both bloody and disastrous to the settlers; after the Seven Oaks Massacre which closed the strife between the settlers and the Nor' West Trading Company, Lord Selkirk realized the paramount importance of religion to maintain peace in the Colony. After several conferences with Mgr. Plessis, Bishop of Quebec, the two above mentioned priests were sent to the Red River Settlement. They reached Fort Douglas on the sixteenth of July and there the first Mass was celebrated on Sunday, the eighteenth. The Canadian Pacific Depot at Winnipeg now stands on the spot where the first altar in the West was erected.

Instructions had been given the missionaries to settle on the East bank of the Red River, where a large grant of land had been given to them by Lord Selkirk. Having built a small house, part of which was to be used as a temporary chapel, they celebrated Mass for the first time on November the first.

Rev. Father Provencher immediately set about building a little frame church which was completed in 1820. He placed it under the patronage of Saint Boniface, Apostle of Germany, in order to please the disbanded German Catholic soldiers of the Des Meurons regiment who had settled on the banks of the Seine River. This regiment — 100 strong — had come out with Lord Selkirk to restore peace to the colony.



COLLÈGE DE 1855

COLLEGE OF 1855

On the twelfth of May, 1822, at Three Rivers, Rev. Father Provencher was consecrated auxiliary Bishop of the diocese of Quebec for the district of the Red River. In 1844, this district became vicariate apostolic and in 1847, was made a diocese. In 1871, the diocese of Saint Boniface was raised to the rank of archdiocese and metropolitan see.

Bishop Provencher died in 1853; he had as successor Bishop Taché who governed the diocese until his death in 1894. He was succeeded by Bishop Langevin who died in 1915. He was succeeded by Bishop Béliveau. In 1933, Bishop Yelle was appointed to the office of coadjutor for the diocese.

In 1829, Bishop Provencher built the Archbishop's Palace, and began to erect the new cahedral which was completed in 1837. It was a stone structure adjoining the bishopric. Its glory, its beauty was sung by the American poet, Whittier in the lyric, "The Bells of Saint Boniface". Fire broke out on December fourteenth, 1860, and the two structures were reduced to ashes. In 1862, on these ruins arose a new stone bishopric and an imposing Cathedral. The Bishopric was enlarged in 1899, and the Cathedral grown too small to accommodate the increasing Catholic population, was demolished in 1908, and replaced by the present magnificient edifice which has been recently decorated.

In the crypt of the new cathedral, repose the ashes of their Excellencies Bishops Provencher, Taché, Langevin; of Bishop Faraud, Vicar apostolic of Athabaska-Mackenzie, who died in Saint Boniface; of the first three pioneer priests who died in the diocese, Rev. Father Darveau massacred by the Indians in 1844, Rev. Fathers Tissot and Maisonneuve, O. M. I.

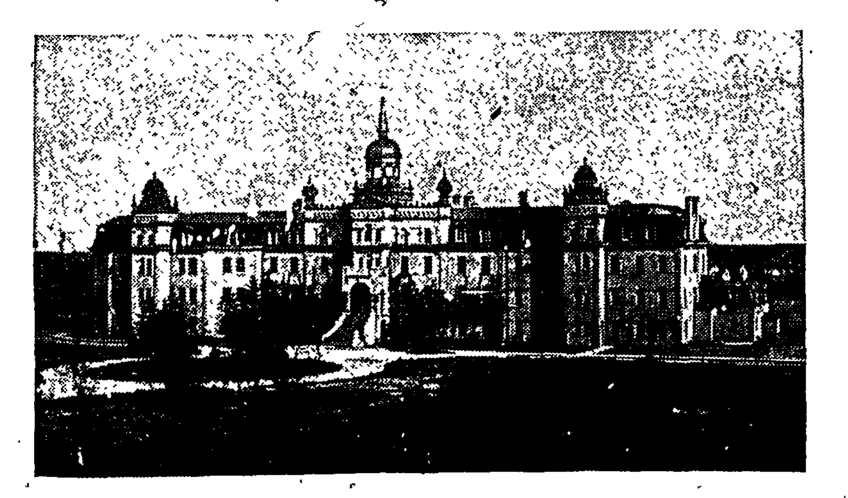
In 1934, a chapel dedicated to Saint Emil was erected on Saint Anne's Road. A priest from the Cathedral attends to the parish.

There are two other parishes in the City of Saint Boniface: one for the Belgian congregation and one for the English speaking congregation. The former was erected in 1917, the latter in 1922.

The Church for the Belgian congregation is dedicated to the Sacred Heart; it is situated on Plinquet Street, on the East bank of the Seine River. The parish is under the direction of the Capuchin Fathers since 1928. These zealous priests have erected near the Church, a replica of the grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, France. They have also built a missionary chapel on the parish grounds.

The Church attended by the English speaking congregation is that of the Holy Cross; it is situated in Norwood near Saint Mary's Road. Ten years ago, a parochial school conducted by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, was opened in the parish.

To commemorate the canonization of the Canadian Jesuit Martyrs, in 1930, a small chapel built on the Old College Grounds was dedicated to them. The Jesuits are in charge of this chapel.



COLLÈGE INCENDIÉ EN 1922

COLLEGE DESTROYED BY FIRE IN 1922

Saint Boniface College

Saint Boniface College was founded in 1818. Its beginnings were very humble. The instruction and education of the children of the colonists were the first cares of the missionaries; furthermore they began to teach the young boys Latin and the rudiments of the Classical Course of Studies in order to prepare them for the Seminary.

In 1854, the Brothers of the Christian Schools took charge of the College. They left in 1860; they were succeeded first, by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and then, by secular priests.

In 1885, Bishop Taché entrusted the charge of this important Institution to the Society of Jesus who, with zeal and success, still continue to devote themselves to the Higher Catholic and French Education in Manitoba.

When in 1877, the University of Manitoba was founded, the Saint Boniface College was immediately affiliated, and still holds its charter.

For a long time the College and the parochial school were one. But in 1855, the primary school was separated from the secondary school — the latter had for its lodgings a building erected near the archiepiscopal house. Here the College stood until 1881, when an imposing structure was erected in the very heart of the city of Saint Boniface. By successive enlargements, the original structure became the stately edifice which was totally destroyed by fire on the sinister night of November the twenty-fifth, 1922.

In 1909, Bishop Langevin had founded in the Old College a "Petit Séminaire". That students and professors might have a dwelling more in keeping with their pursuits, His Excellency had erected the magnificent stone edifice just behind the Cathedral. After the College was destroyed by fire, Archbishop Béliveau entrusted it to the Jesuit Fathers that they might continue their work. Since then, a large wing has been added to further their educational activities.

Formerly, the students of the "Petit Séminaire" followed classes and lectures at the College, as do those of the Juniorate founded in 1905, under the dirtction of the Oblate Fathers.

Provincial House and Juniorate of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate

In 1912, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate transferred their Provincial House from Saint Mary's Rectory in Saint Mary's Parish, Winnipeg, to the corner of Provencher and Des Meurons Streets, Saint Boniface. In the same year, they purchased the former Convent School of the Sisters of the Holy Names. There they also transferred the Juniorate already opened in the old Industrial Indian Reserve School of Des Meurons Street, after fire had destroyed that building.

Establishments directed by the Grey Sisters

The Grey Sisters of Montreal reached Saint-Boniface on June the twenty-first, 1844. Bishop Provencher welcomed the four missionaries, and gave them as temporary lodgings a part of the Archiepiscopal Palace. In 1846 they entered their first establishment; it is now a part of their Provincial House. In this venerated house these courageous women inaugurated their various works of charity and education. To this day, it remains the central axis around which their present varied institutions gravitate.

Saint Boniface Hospital which has grown so rapidly, dates back to 1871. The wings added successively in 1877, 1888, 1905 and 1916, have made it what it is to-day. In 1928, a splendid School for Nurses was erected at one end of this stately structure. This year, 1938, sees the erecting of a fine Dispensary on the other end of the building.

Saint Roch Hospital for infectious diseases, situated a short distance from the General Hospital, was founded in 1900 and improved and modernized in 1928.

The cycle of the hospitable work of the Grey Sisters was completed in 1931 by the opening, in the Municipality of Saint Vital, but in the parish of Saint Boniface, of a large and modern Sanatorium for tubercular patients.

Adjoining the Provincial House, the Grey Sisters erected a separate novitiate, last year, for the young candidates wishing to join the Order. For the past few years, the very spacious Hospice Taché, which also forms a part of the Provincial House, has been totally devoted to housing the Aged. It is known as "The Old Folks' Home".

The Hospice Taché as it stands to-day was first erected in 1881 and considerably enlarged in 1910. From 1883 to 1898, one part of the building served as Boarding School for the girls; later, it was taken over to accommodate orphaned girls and Aged only. In the other part of the Hospice, the personnel of the Provincial House and Novitiate was housed.

The two Academies of Saint Boniface

Saint Joseph's Collegiate Institute and Provencher Academy are the two large schools of the City, situated respectively on either side of Cathedral Avenue, facing each other.

The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary have given complete courses in the former institution since 1898. The Brothers of the Society of Mary have charge of the latter, since 1899.

The Missionary Oblates of the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate

The Mother House of the Missionary Oblates of the Sacred Heart and Mary Immaculate stands at the Corner of Aulneau and Masson Streets. This Community was founded by Bishop Langevin in 1904. Forming a part of the Mother House, is a Kindergarden for boys. The Feminine Section of "Catholic Action" has its Headquarters here.

Other Communities

There are two other Religious Orders in the City of Saint Boniface. Since 1918, the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood have a monastery located on corner of Notre Dame and Taché.

The Sisters of the Holy Family, whose Mother House is in Sherbrooke, Quebec, are in charge of household department of the Archiepiscopal House since 1912; they also perform the same duties for the Oblate Fathers at the Juniorate in Saint Boniface since 1922.

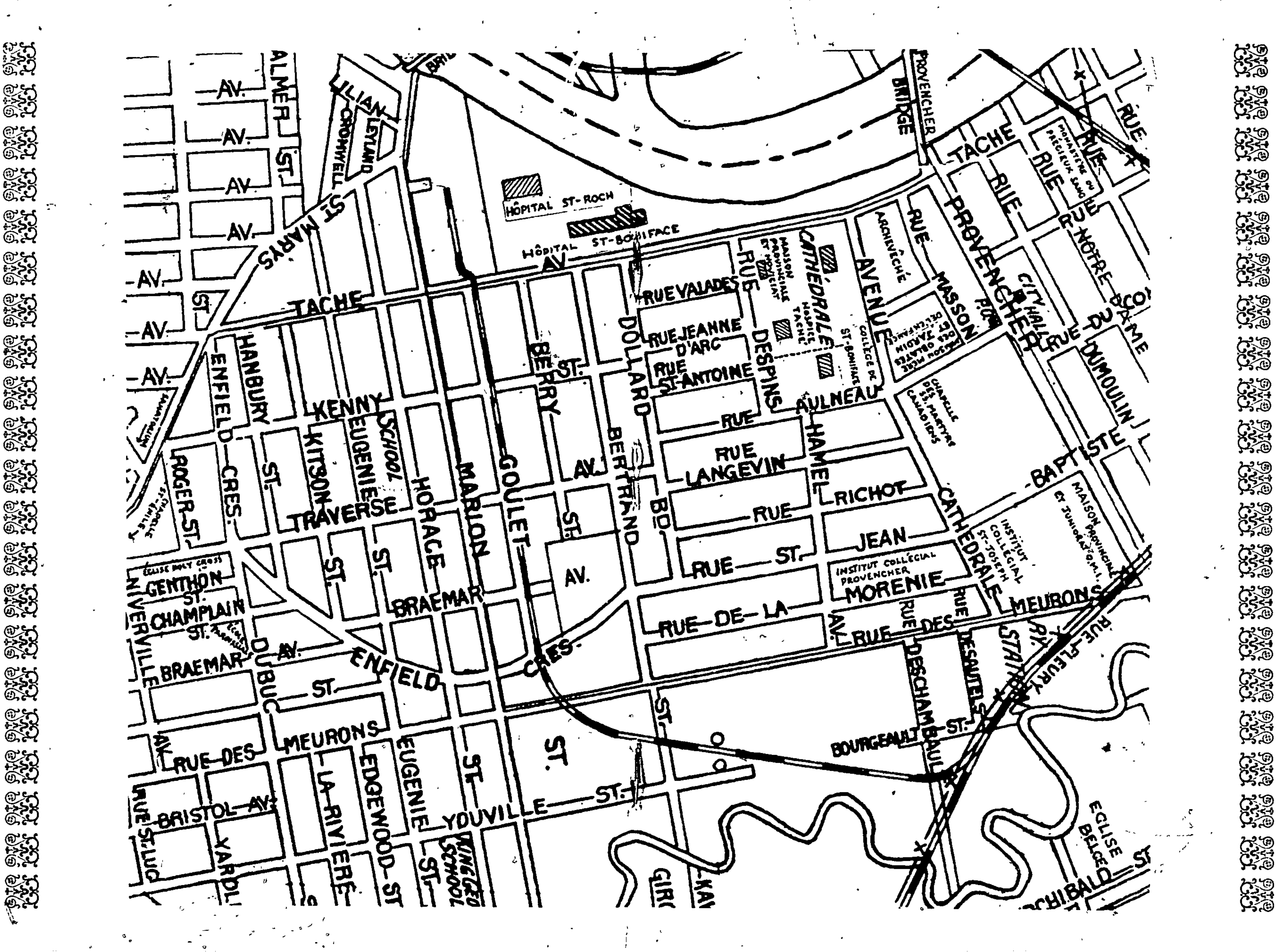
In closing, we may further add that the original building of the College of Saint Boniface erected in 1855, housed various and different personnels. From 1886 it was a primary school for boys; from 1912 to 1929, it was the Carmelite Monastery. After the departure of the Carmelite Sisters, it was demolished.

The Cemetery

Saint Boniface Cemetery which surrounds the present Cathedral treasures the souvenirs of a whole century. In this same church-yard, the former Cathedrals were erected.

Many are the pioneers and citizens whose ashes rest here; among these may be mentioned the famous Louis Riel, the leader of the legitimate Red River Rising in 1869-1870; Marie-Anne Gaboury, first white woman of the plains and her famous husband and "coureur des bois", Jean Baptiste La Gimodière; François Bruneau, magistrate; the Nault, Lépine, Nolin, Goulet; the McTavish, McDermot, Rowand, d'Eschambault, Kittson, Bélanger, Gingras and other servants of the Hudson Bay Company. Among citizens of a more recent time, Hon. J. E. Cauchon, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba; Senators Girard, Bernier, Chevrier and La Rivière; Sir Joseph Dubuc, Chief Justice of Manitoba.

Near the entrance to the Cemetery, stands the impressive Monument which the French Veterans of the Great War erected to commemorate the heroes of Canadian West, who died on the battle field, that others might live.


HÔPITAL ST-ROCH
HÔPITAL ST-BONIFACE
PROVENCHER BRIDGE
TACHE AV.
ST. MARYS
CATHÉDRALE
ARCHEVÊCHÉ
CITY HALL
RUE VALADES
RUE JEANNE D'ARC
RUE ST-ANTOINE
DOLLARD
DESPINS
AULNEAU
RUE LANGEVIN
HAMEL
RICHOT
RUE ST. JEAN
INSTITUT COLLÉGIAL PROVENCHER
RUE DE LA MORENIE
RUE DES MEURONS
BOURGEAULT ST.
DESCHAMBAULT
DESAUTELS
RUE FLEURY
BAPTISTE
DUMOULIN
RUE NOTRE DAME
PROVENCHER
MASSON
CATHEDRALE
ENFIELD CRES.
HANBURY
KENNY
KITSON
EUGENIE
HORACE
MARION
GOULET
BERRY ST.
BERTRAND
TRAVERSE
BRAEMAR AV.
GENTHON ST.
CHAMPLAIN ST.
NIVERVILLE
DUBUC ST.
ROGER ST.
RUE DES MEURONS
BRISTOL AV.
RUE ST. LUC
LA RIVIERE
EDGEWOOD ST.
YOUVILLE ST.
EGLISE BELGE
ARCHIBALD
SCHOOL